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Defense Dept. Panel Urges New Measures To Deter Espionage

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 20 — A Pentagon commission studying ways to deter espionage has recommended a broad array of security measures, a member of the commission said today. It includes a significantly expanded program of random polygraph, or lie-detector, tests for military personnel and civilian contractors, he said.

The commission's report, which will be issued Thursday, also calls for a program of financial rewards for informers who turn in spies. It recommends substantial reductions in the storage of unneeded classified material, more limited use of secret classifications and reductions in the number of people who have access to classified material.

Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger will decide which recommendations to adopt; some would require congressional action.

The commission was set up in July, after the arrest of John A. Walker Jr., a retired Navy chief warrant officer, on espionage charges. Mr. Walker and his son, Michael Lance Walker, pleaded guilty last month to spying for the Soviet Union. The elder Mr. Walker's brother, Arthur J. Walker, was convicted of espionage in August.

According to the commission member, the report proposes stiffer penalties for defense contractors who violate security rules and calls for spot checks of military personnel and civilian defense employees and their briefcases or satchels. It would also require some active duty personnel to report all foreign travel and would forbid military personnel and contractors to work by themselves in a room with sensitive information.

The commission member said the group called on Mr. Weinberger to order a complete review of security procedures by all military commands to assess whether they were following existing rules.

Pentagon officials acknowledge that the problems addressed in the commission's 63 recommendations have proved resistant to change. They said some of the group's proposals, such as reduction of the amount of classified infor-

mation, have been unsuccessfully tried by previous Administrations. But the officials believe the recent espionage cases have spurred new support for better security in Congress and in the military's commands.

"The impetus of the Walker case and the other cases mean that we're redoubling our efforts," a Pentagon official said. "This commission was carefully picked to include the people who will have to follow it up. I wouldn't write this off as just another commission."

The commission, headed by a retired Army General, Richard G. Stilwell, included representatives from each of the Pentagon agencies covered by its recommendations.

The proposal for expanded use of the polygraph is likely to run into some opposition on Capitol Hill, where critics have worried that such examinations are unreliable and are often used as a substitute for more time-consuming methods of investigation.

The validity of polygraph tests is hotly disputed, with various experts estimating their accuracy at anywhere from 50 percent to 99 percent.

Congress has permitted the Department of Defense to establish a program over the next three years under which it would administer 14,000 polygraph tests to certain officials with access to materials classified Top Secret or higher. The commission member said the panel had urged that this program be expanded to include random polygraph tests for the much larger number of people who are permitted to see material classified only as Secret.

Under the proposal, even relatively low-ranking military personnel like Mr. Walker could be subjected to random polygraph tests. In 1975 the Department of Defense abandoned its program of special security procedures for those who use cryptographic materials because it was viewed as being overly burdensome.

The recommendation on reporting foreign travel appears also to have been inspired by the Walker case and others like it. Mr. Walker met his Soviet contacts in Vienna, Austria, prosecutors have said.

About 3.8 million people have access to classified information. About 2.6 million are military personnel or employees of the Department of Defense and 1.2 million are employees of civilian contractors.

According to the commission member, the report calls for stiffer penalties for contractors whose security procedures are found to be lax. Under the proposal, repeated violations of the rules could result in loss of a facility's security clearance, which could result in loss of defense contracts.

The recommendation that military personnel and contractors be barred

from handling sensitive information by themselves was inspired, in part, by the espionage case against James Durward Harper Jr., a California man who passed research data to a Polish spy. Mr. Harper's wife, Ruby Louise Schuler Harper, who later died, was said to have stolen the information from her employer, a defense contractor, by working alone in the office on weekends.

The commission has developed a series of recommendations intended to make the military services more conscious of security problems. Among these, the commission member said, is a proposal that the military's system for evaluating performance, the fitness report, include an entry on the handling of secret material.

The commission was concerned over the Pentagon's slow pace in re-examining those who have held high level clearances for a number of years. Existing policies require a reinvestigation every five years, a goal the Defense Department has not met, officials have acknowledged.

To help speed the process of repeat investigations, the commission called for the elimination of what it said were needless security clearances that occupy the Pentagon's limited number of investigators.